

# Excellence in Government: Information Sharing Panel


By **Michael Howell**

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This morning, I moderated a panel at the [Excellence in Government](#) <sup>[4]</sup> conference about Information Sharing and Protection. Panelists included:

-  **Susan Swart**, Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of State
- **Stefaan G. Verhulst**, Chief of Research, Markle Foundation
- **Dan Chenok**, Senior Fellow, IBM Center for The Business of Government
- **Thomas Pyke**, former Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of Energy; currently Executive Advisor, Cyber Technologies, Booz Allen Hamilton

To open, I introduced the Information Sharing Environment and two important information sharing successes: [State and Major Urban Areas Fusion Centers](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and the [Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative](#) <sup>[6]</sup>.

During the panel, we discussed other examples of information sharing success and how to incentivize responsible sharing.

## Information Sharing Success

At one point, the panel discussed the idea that information sharing is not the end goal, but the means to improve government and improve mission effectiveness. A participant asked for specific examples of sharing successes, and panelists pointed to A-Space, the Intelligence Community's secure online community discussion space; the VA and DoD's information sharing, which has significantly increased and improved the services they provide to veterans; eTravel and ePayroll for the federal government; and the [National Information Exchange Model \(NIEM\)](#) <sup>[7]</sup>.

## Establishing and Cultivating Trust

Many acknowledge trust as a significant prerequisite for successful information sharing, so I asked the panel to discuss how to establish and cultivate trust to enable information sharing. Panelists shared several interesting ideas. One pointed out that a basis for trust can be established through formal agreements that are fully understood by both parties. Another highlighted the idea of "trust but verify," and that accountability and oversight procedures are important. And finally, a panelist claimed the similar idea of "trust but notify," and that mistrust can come from a lack of knowledge about what happens once information is shared, so increased notification and feedback capabilities can greatly improve information

sharing.

It was a productive discussion that underscored both the complexity and importance of our information sharing efforts.

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Mon, 05/23/2011

#### Reference:

[National Information Exchange Model \(NIEM\)](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

[Improving NIEM Tools through Standards Body Partnerships](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

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[21] <http://www.ise.gov/blog/david-bray/aggregating-and-sharing-terrorism-related-data-large-scale>